

really because it is phony. They use the overseas contingency fund, which everybody knows is phony. They want to help the military. I want to help the military also. But, sadly, the Republican budget does absolutely nothing to provide similar protections for the middle class.

There is, however, some good news about the Republican budget, and it is this: The Republican budget isn't worth the paper it is written on. It is going to go nowhere. There is no chance of the budget actually being implemented. President Obama and the congressional Democrats are committed to the middle class, so we are not going to let it happen.

The administration has made it very clear that President Obama is not willing to lock in sequestration in any appropriations bill or in anything else. In a Statement of Administration Policy—the forerunner of a veto—the Obama administration said: “The President’s senior advisors would recommend that he veto . . . any legislation that implements the current Republican budget framework.” Nor will the President accept fixes to defense without also fixing nondefense budget items. For President Obama, it is simply a matter of principle, and congressional Democrats fully agree with his principle. So the Republican budget isn't going anywhere.

If Republicans insist on moving appropriations bills based on that budget, it is a waste of their time. It will not happen. We will not let that happen. What we need is a budget that is based in reality, a budget that is fair to the middle class, fair to the American people, a budget that will only happen when Republicans abandon their extreme attacks on the poor and middle class and sit down and talk to us about the way forward.

I note that no one is seeking the floor, and I would ask that the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided in the usual form.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CAPITO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the time be charged equally between the majority and the minority.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FLAKE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IRAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT REVIEW ACT

Mr. FLAKE. Madam President, I come to the floor today to talk about S. 615, the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act. This bill establishes a process to guarantee congressional review of any agreement reached between the P5+1 and Iran.

Like everybody else here, my goal is to ensure that Iran does not acquire nuclear weapons. With that goal in mind, I have avoided supporting measures over the past 18 months that would impact the administration's ongoing negotiations. I believe it is incumbent upon us to explore every avenue of diplomacy to stop Iran from getting a nuclear weapon.

There have been suggestions that this legislation we are considering today will negatively impact the negotiations for a final agreement. To the contrary, I think this legislation will improve the chances of reaching a final accord. Most importantly, it will improve the chances that this accord will stand the test of time.

If approved, the President will have to negotiate knowing that Congress will ultimately review this agreement. That is only proper given that the terms of the agreement go far beyond—far beyond—the current administration.

In truth, Congress has always had a role here. It was the U.S. Congress that passed the sanctions that brought Iran to the negotiating table. It is only the U.S. Congress that can permanently lift the sanctions. Unfortunately, the administration would prefer to go it alone when it comes to the implementation of this agreement by using the waiver authority that was granted when these sanctions were passed.

There is no dispute that the President can lift these sanctions on a temporary basis. But since this agreement is slated to last well beyond the President's term and even the next President's term, any effective, enduring agreement has to have congressional buy-in. Let me repeat. If this legislation fails, the President will be able to sign a final agreement and have a nice signing ceremony, but an effective, enduring agreement to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon will require congressional buy-in.

We also need to recognize that we are not operating in a vacuum. Once an agreement that includes our allies is reached, the multilateral sanctions regime that has been so effective in bringing Iran to the negotiating table will be defunct. These sanctions have been effective because it has been Iran versus the West rather than Iran versus the United States. It is unreasonable to assume that such a united front can be reassembled before Iran obtains a nuclear weapon.

That is why the bill before us today is so important. It sets up a process for review by Congress of any agreement, preventing the administration from presenting Congress with a fait accompli. This legislation will not repeal any sanctions currently in place against Iran. Congress will still have to take action to lift these sanctions permanently. Its passage ensures that if Congress does repeal the sanctions, it does so because it chooses to, not because it has no other choice.

I would also like to take a moment to reflect on the process that brought this bill out of committee. Tough issues were thoughtfully worked out and compromises were made to get this bill language to a place where the bill was voted unanimously out of committee with a recorded vote. Thanks to firm commitments made by the chairman and the ranking member to keep this bill bipartisan, the White House—which for weeks had threatened to veto the bill—reversed its position just hours before the markup. This about-face was likely due to the fact that there were so many Senators on a bipartisan basis lining up to support this bill.

This legislation signals to the administration that it needs to keep Congress in mind when it negotiates. And, without poison pill amendments being added, the President will be forced to sign it.

Most importantly, I am hopeful that the passage of this bill out of committee signifies a return to a time the Foreign Relations Committee is able to work across the aisle on foreign policy matters. I realize it cannot always happen, but the ideal is when partisan politics can—as Senator Vandenberg put it—stop at the water's edge.

The reality is that given the myriad of foreign policy challenges that confront us around the globe, we do not have the luxury of partisanship, and nowhere is this more evident than with the legislation we are considering today. I hope we can come together and pass it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROUNDS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.